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Research News for the U.S. Travel Industry

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TRAVEL PRINTOUT

US Travel Data Center

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Travel Prices Decline For Second Consecutive Month

For the second consecutive month, the overall price of travel has declined, according to the US Travel Data Center's Travel Price Index (TPI).

The TPI, which measures changes in the seasonally unadjusted prices of lodging, food, transportation and other goods and services purchased by Americans traveling away from home in the U.S., dropped to 120.4 (1982-84=100) in October, the second consecutive monthly decline (see chart on page 2).

October travel costs declined 0.2 percent, due to a slight decrease in motor fuel prices, reports the latest TPI.

For comparison, overall goods and services costs, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose 0.3 percent in October.

Motor fuel costs fell 1.8 percent in October, while other intercity transportation showed a 0.7 percent decline. The price of lodging fell 0.6 percent in the monthly comparisons.

The declines in these components, coupled with marginal increases in airline fares and intracity public transportation costs, caused the overall price of transportation to decrease 0.9 percent in October.

The October TPI gained 3.7 percent when compared to the same month in 1987, while the CPI rose 4.2 percent during the same period. Motor fuel prices, the only component to show a decrease compared to October 1987, fell 1.9 percent. ##

Data Center Co-sponsors Travel Review Conference

The U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration (USTTA), Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA), and the US Travel Data Center (new co-sponsor) are jointly sponsoring the third annual Travel Review Conference, on February 23, 1989 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Highlights include trends in 1988 domestic travel and international travel, as well as 1988 travel trends in transportation, leisure travel markets, accommodations and lessons learned from disasters in 1988.

For more information on the Travel Review Conference, contact Vernon Azucenas at the Data Center, 202/293-1040. ##

Foreign Visitors Spend Billions in U.S.

Foreign visitors spent an average of $15.4 billion a year in the United States and its territories during 1985 and 1986, according to a recent study conducted for the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration (USTTA) by the US Travel Data Center.

The study's results, included in the Impact of Foreign Visitors' Spending on States' Economies 1985-86, show foreign visitors' spending alone supported 318,000 jobs, creating a yearly average of $3.5 billion in payroll income during 1985-86.
(continued on page 3)

Travelers Discover Frequent, Short Vacations

Americans, not merely content with taking the traditional one- or two-week vacation, have discovered they can break up the long wait between trips with weekend and long weekend vacations, according to the Data Center's monthly National Travel Survey.

In fact, if weekend vacation travel continues to increase at its present pace, it will grow 11 percent this year. (A weekend vacation is a vacation trip of one to five nights including a Saturday night.)

Overall vacation travel has risen 9 percent from January to August 1988 compared to the same period in 1987, while total travel has risen 4 percent during the same period.

However, the length of the average vacation has dropped slightly over the past two years compared to non-vacation stays. Americans are leaving home more often, but staying away for shorter periods of time.

Of the several explanations for this year's jump in weekend vacations, the most popular remains the vicissitudes of the economy. During low points in the nation's economy, travelers sacrifice weekend vacations to pursue longer vacations.

However, with the economy on an upswing and confidence in growing employment, consumers are more willing to add weekend trips to their travel plans. ##

Data Center Receives Education Award

The US Travel Data Center recently received the second annual Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (STTE) Award for its outstanding contribution to travel and tourism education. The award, funded by National Publishers, was presented by STTE's president, Dr. James Burke of the Rochester Institute of Technology and Earl Coleman, president of National Publishers, during STTE's annual banquet. ##

Monthly and Annual Rates of Change in the Travel Price Index and Components

October 1988 TPI Component	Monthly Percent Change September 1988 to October 1988	Annual Percent Change October 1987 to October 1988
Transportation	-0.9	-0.2
Airline Fares	0.2	2.0
Other Intercity Trans.	-0.7	4.8
Intracity Public Trans.	0.3	2.8
Motor Fuel	-1.8	-1.9
Lodging	-0.6	5.5
Food and Beverages Away From Home	0.3	4.4
Entertainment	0.8	3.4
TRAVEL PRICE INDEX	-0.2	3.7
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	0.3	4.2

Source: US Travel Data Center and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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Travel Printout reports on Data Center Projects, national travel research conducted by other respected organizations, and trends in the U.S. travel industry. Subscriptions are $70 per year, U.S., Canada and Mexico; other foreign countries, $80 per year, payable in U.S. funds only. ISSN: 0744-6233.

September Travel Climbs 5 Percent

September travel rose 5 percent over year-earlier levels, according to the latest results of the National Travel Survey.

The monthly telephone survey reports that Americans took 107.8 million person-trips during September 1988. (A person-trip is one person traveling 100 miles or more away from home.)

Vacation travel jumped nearly 8 percent over the previous year, travel for business/convention purposes rose 4 percent, while weekend travel showed a modest 2 percent increase over 1987 levels.

Travel by auto/truck/RV, which steadily increased through the summer months, rose 7 percent, while air travel increased 2 percent in September.

Use of hotels/motels climbed 7 percent above year-earlier levels for September.

Average trip duration remained constant with last year's figure, 4.4 nights, while the average round-trip distance rose from 850 miles to 980 miles. ##

Foreign Visitor Spending (continued from page 1)

Foreign visitors spent more on incidentals (gifts, souvenirs, and miscellaneous purchases) than any other category, including lodging, which was the number one expenditure category in a similar study of foreign visitor spending in 1983.

Nearly one-third of all foreign visitors' dollars were spent in the Pacific census region. California collected the most from foreign visitors, $3.2 billion, followed by Florida, $2.1 billion, and New York, $1.9 billion.

This report, which has already been sent to full members of the Data Center, is available to others for $50, prepaid, from the US Travel Data Center, 1133 21st St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. ##

Attention TIA members: This is the last issue of Travel Printout to be mailed separately to TIA members. Please see future editions of Newsline for important news and announcements from the US Travel Data Center. ##

Visitor Volume at National Parks

Region	SEPT 1988 visits	Change from SEPT 1987* (percent)	Percent change 1988/1987* Year-to-Date
NEW ENGLAND	1,859,643	3	0
MIDDLE ATLANTIC	2,606,772	-12	-17
SOUTH ATLANTIC	8,620,989	-6	-1
EAST SOUTH CENTRAL	2,068,033	10	11
EAST NORTH CENTRAL	572,981	2	12
WEST NORTH CENTRAL	932,034	5	4
WEST SOUTH CENTRAL	777,962	-4	2
MOUNTAIN	4,381,941	-5	2
PACIFIC	5,182,498	3	0
TOTAL	27,002,853	-3	-1

* Percent change figures may not be consistent with those previously reported due to National Park Service revisions.

States comprising the Census regions:
New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont. **Middle Atlantic:** New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania. **South Atlantic:** Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia. **East South Central:** Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee. **East North Central:** Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin. **West North Central:** Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota. **West South Central:** Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas. **Mountain:** Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming. **Pacific:** Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington.

Current Travel Indicators

CURRENT TRAVEL INDICATORS

	Current Month	Current Value	Percent Change: Previous Month	Percent Change: Year-ago Month	Percent Change: Year to date
Establishment receipts or retail sales					
Hotels, motels and other lodging places(1)	Sep	$ 4,445 million	-8.4	5.5	8.6
Eating and drinking places(2)	Sep	$13,412 million	1.3	9.2	5.3
Gasoline service stations(2)	Sep	$ 9,018 million	-1.7	1.7	4.7
Commercial lodging demand					
Hotel/motel occupancy rate(3)	Sep	62.4 percent	-0.3	-0.5	0.8
Real demand for commercial lodging(4)	Sep	58.6 million	-9.8	3.5	4.5
Airline passenger traffic(5)					
Domestic revenue passenger-miles	Sep	24.5 billion	-21.8	4.1	0.1
International revenue passenger-miles	Sep	8.5 billion	-20.2	16.5	17.7
Highway traffic volume(6)					
Rural arterial vehicle-miles	Sep	42.2 billion	-13.2	3.9	4.8
Rail passenger traffic(7)					
Amtrak passenger-miles	Sep	424.2 million	-27.9	0.5	8.2
Travel Price Index(8)	Sep	120.6	-1.4	3.2	4.2
U.S. resident travel					
Total person-trips (9)	Sep	107.8 million	-29.3	5.1	4.0
Vacation person-trips (9)	Sep	69.0 million	-38.9	7.5	8.7
Total person-nights (10)	Sep	470.9 million	-31.4	5.9	-2.7
Vacation person-nights (10)	Sep	347.8 million	-41.7	8.7	-0.1
Public use of national parks(11)					
Visits	Sep	27,002,853	-30.4	-3.0	-1.0
Overnight stays	Sep	1,796,087	-43.5	-11.0	-2.0
Foreign arrivals in U.S.					
From overseas (12)	Aug	N/A			
From Canada (13)	Sep	1,173,093	-38.7	11.9	9.8
From Mexico (12)	Aug	N/A			
U.S. citizen departures					
To overseas (12)	Jul	1,649,044	9.5	8.4	5.8
	Aug	1,462,285	-11.3	4.6	5.6
To Canada (13)	Sep	1,421,178	-35.3	2.3	-0.3
Domestic demand for motor gasoline(14)					
Barrels per day	Sep	7,349 thousand	-2.2	2.5	2.0

N/A Not Available

(1) Source: Smith Travel Research, seasonally unadjusted. (2) Preliminary; revised monthly. Source: Bureau of the Census. (3) Source: Smith Travel Research, seasonally adjusted, 1986 and 1987 data have been revised. (4) Smith Travel Research, (unadjusted room nights sold. (5) Preliminary; U.S. scheduled service air carriers. Source: Air Transport Association. (6) Preliminary; revised monthly. Source: Federal Highway Administration. (7) Source: National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak). (8) Source: US Travel Data Center and Bureau of Labor Statistics. (9) Source: US Travel Data Center. (10) US Travel Data Center. Data is not comparable to earlier published numbers due to revised methodology. (11) Preliminary; unadjusted for differences in reporting units. Source: National Park Service. (12) Source: U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration. Mexican data reflect 19% arrivals only. (13) Statistics Canada (14) Preliminary; Source: U.S. Department of Energy.

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